

This course involves a U.S. decision (publicly announced or not, now or later) to withdraw all U.S. forces from SVN in one year or less (depending almost exclusively on logistic considerations), whether or not an agreement is reached in Paris.

A. Assumptions

1. The war is unwinnable (a. in acceptable ways, b. as envisaged, i.e., as a positive political and social outcome for SVN).

No matter what statistics might indicate or official reporters feel, our efforts cannot resolve the political problems that are at the heart of this war.

We should therefore cut our losses and avoid unknown additional risks while we can, and devote resources and energies to other activities elsewhere.

2. The Nixon Administration can successfully explain this course to the American people and other nations, particularly in its early days.

The American people will be receptive because many are disenchanted with the war, and because many believe that

domestic priorities would benefit (Public opinion has responded favorably to deescalation and has favored escalation only "to get it over with." If no acceptable "get it over with" prospect in sight, public likely to favor unilateral withdrawal.

Other nations will accept our action because we have met our commitments by large investment in men and resources, and shown flexibility in accepting the situation.

3. It is important to start the withdrawal process now and complete it quickly because otherwise the new administration runs a risk of getting locked in (War transferred from Johnson to Nixon administration rather than from U.S. to SVN or GVN forces).

4. A withdrawal might at least provide the invigoration to the GVN that it needs to transform themselves or at least affect the situation in the future.

5. Withdrawal "limits damage," saves lives, conserves resources now.

6. The decision frees the United States, making it independent of objectives that must be obtained.

B. Military Actions

1. U.S. forces are drawn down to zero on a crash basis.
(According to logistic estimates, can be done in a year or less.)
2. U.S. immediately assumes posture suited for dedeployment.
3. Equipment turned over to GVN (as much as they are able to use).
4. Bases?

C. Paris

U.S. tries to negotiate for reciprocal NVA withdrawal, using pace and scope of American withdrawal as bargaining counters (but U.S. withdraws in any case).

U.S. insists on cease-fire during withdrawal

D. Declaratory Policies

1. U.S. maintains a strong declaratory policy against NVN (and other Communist) aggression and reaffirms U.S. interest in Asian nations willing to help themselves.

2. U.S. declares for home consumption that the sacrifices of the past were not in vain but that the changed situation requires a new course (liquidation).

E. GVN

1. U.S. says it will continue to help present or other non-Communist forces as much as we can. Maintains a small force of technical advisers.

2. U.S. applies no pressure for reforms and supports and is friendly to whatever GVN (or non-Communists in a coalition government) want to do.

F. Cost

1. Fastest way of reducing cost radically
2. Fastest way of reducing US casualties.

G. Consequences

Probable collapse of GVN and Communist takeover, but possibility of non-Communist coalition government. Even a Communist government after collapse not necessarily altogether Hanoi's "stooge."

1. Probable collapse of present SVN and Communist takeover, but some possibility of a non-Communist coalition government.

a. SVN countryside quickly taken over by VC.

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2. Initial concern on part of some Asian nations, but no domino process, except for Laos.

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a. Laos would probably go Communist quickly and Thais might hedge their ties with us, but would not be severely threatened.

3. U.S. Government would be attacked domestically by some for a pull out, but cannot predict depth or dimensions. Would be praised by others.